The *Danger* and *Miſchief* of *a Miſ-guided Zeal:*

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

PARISH CHURCH

OF

St. *James Weſtminſter*,

APRIL the 2*d*, 1710.

Wake (W)
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By the Right Reverend Father in God
WILLIAM Lord Biſhop of *LINC*[illegible]

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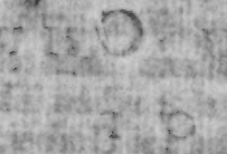

ROM. X. 2.

For I bear Them Record that They have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge.

IN theſe Words we have the *Apoſtle*'s Character of the *Unbelieving Jews*, or at leaſt of the better Sort of Them. He tells us that They *had a Zeal of God*; and that when They rejected our Bleſſed Saviour, oppoſed his Goſpel, and even perſecuted his Followers, They thought that They did Him Service. But their *Zeal* was *without Knowledge*: It was a *furious, blind, erroneous Zeal*; and Such as notwithſtanding Their *Good Intention*, would End in nothing leſs than *Damnation* at the laſt. St. *Paul* earneſtly deſir'd, and pray'd for, their Salvation; *Brethren*, ſays He, *my hearts deſire, and prayer to God, for Iſrael is, that they might be Saved*: But He knew that without *Repentance*, and *Converſion*, They muſt be *loſt* notwithſtanding all their *Zeal*, nay the rather by reaſon of it; and therefore He gives Them the true Character of it in the Words of the *Text*; That *they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

From which *Example* of that deluded, and obſtinate People, and the *Cenſure* the *Apoſtle* here paſſes both upon their *Spirit*, and *Actions*; there are theſe *Three* Things which will deſerve our ſerious Conſideration:

I*ſt.* That there may be a *Zeal of God, without Knowledge.*

II*dly.* That where Such *a Zeal* prevails in any Number of Perſons, it will generally be the Occaſion *of much Miſchief.*

III*dly.* That notwithſtanding any Such *Zeal of God,* yet if Mens *Actions* are not agreeable to *God's Will,* They will be *accounted Sinful* now, and be *puniſh'd by Him as ſuch* hereafter.

The Conſequence whereof ſhould therefore be this; To oblige Men to take heed that their *Zeal be according to knowledge*; and not to think that They ſhall be any farther either *Secure in* it, or *Juſtified* for it, than as their *Zeal* is Regulated by the ſtrict Meaſures of a *right Faith*, a *perfect Charity*, and a *Univerſal Obedience.*

And, I*ſt.* That there may be *a Zeal of God without Knowledge.*

A Truth as Certain, as that *Good Men* may be *Miſtaken*; and think They *Do well*, when nevertheleſs thro' Error, or Ignorance, they *Do* the quite *Contrary.* Nay more; 'Tis as Certain, as that Men of *violent Paſſions* are *apt*, or at leaſt *liable*, to be led by their *Paſſions* more than by their *Reaſon*; and by that means to fall into Such *Miſtakes*, as in their Own cooler Hours they would not be Guilty of.

Zeal is, in general, the *Violent Effect* of an *Ardent Love.* If it be conſider'd with reſpect to *Our Selves*, and the *Deſire* we have of *Enjoying what we Love*, it carries Us to an *earneſt Endeavour* to *Attain* it; and to *Remove* out of *our way* whatever, we think, may be likely *to hinder* our *Enjoyment* of it. If with Relation to the *Perſon Whom we Love*, it

it moves us no leſs vehemently to Do what We think will be pleaſing to Him; and to *Oppoſe* whatſoever We take to be Repugnant to His *Will*, His *Honour*, or *Intereſt*. But to which ſoever of Theſe it is applied; ſtill *Zeal* ſuppoſes the *Love* to be *very Great*; and, by Conſequence, the Effects of it to be *Strong*, and *Violent*. And therefore as the *Love of God*, and the *Deſire* of our *Own Eternal Salvation*, *ought* to be in *All Men*, and in *all Good Men* truly *is*, the Higheſt of all *Loves*, and *Deſires*; ſo muſt the *Zeal* for theſe be proportionably *Strong*, and *Vehement*. And if it chance to be kindled in the Breaſt of a *Warm*, *Impetuous Votary*, it will *Burn* with *Fury*; and without great Care exceed the Bounds not only of *Reaſon*, but of *Religion* too, in its *Operation*.

For to conſider it more particularly, in each of the *two Reſpects* I have before mentioned.

Firſt, He who *Loves God* with *all his Heart*, muſt needs deſire to *Enjoy Him*; and, in order thereunto, will make it his *earneſt* Endeavour to *Remove* whatſoever may be likely to *Obſtruct* his *Enjoyment* of *Him*. And thus far Our *Zeal* is to be ſure, in the general, not only *Lawful*, but *Commendable*. But ſtill here may be Room, in the purſuit of this *End*, excellent as it is, for *Miſtakes* to come in; and if our *Zeal* be without *Knowledge*, it may Run Us into *Superſtition*, and even into *Sin*. For,

(1*ſt*.) To be *Zealous* in *Avoiding* what is *really Sinful*; *forbidden* by *God*, and *deſtructive* of our *Enjoyment of Him*; is without Controverſy highly *Good*, and *Praiſe-worthy*. Our *Duty* Requires it, and our very *Intereſt* obliges Us to be *Firm*, and *Conſtant*, in Striving againſt it. But yet a Man may be *Deceived* *in judging* of *what* is *forbidden*: He may *think* That to be *Sinful* *which Really is not*; and ſo his *Zeal*, for want of being

ing guided by *Knowledge*, may become utterly vain, and unprofitable.

This was the Caſe of the *Jewiſh-Converts*: They thought it to be *Unlawful* to *Eat* of *ſuch Meats* as the *Law* of *Moſes* had *forbidden*; and They *forbore* ſo to Do, out of *Conſcience* to *God's Commandment*. Nay ſo *Zealous* were they in this Particular, as to account it their Duty not only to *abſtain* from ſuch *Meats Themſelves*, but to *Impoſe* the like *forbearance* even upon the *Gentile Converts*. But they were *miſtaken* in their *Judgment* of their *Duty* as to this Matter: And their *Zeal*, for want of *Knowledge*, ſerved only to bind down a heavy Burden, without need, upon their *Own Shoulders*; and to prompt them to *Judge* too *hardly* of *Others*, who underſtood their *Chriſtian Liberty* better than Themſelves.

I Doubt not but there have been Many among Us who have verily thought the few *Innocent*, and I muſt beg leave to add, even *Decent Ceremonies* of *our Church*, to be *Superſtitious*, and *Unlawful*. Who have look'd upon our *Common-Prayer*, as little better than the *Maſs* Book in *Engliſh*: Our truly *Primitive* and *Apoſtolical Epiſcopacy*, as the Reſult of *Popiſh Pride*, and *Uſurpation*: And our whole *Conſtitution*, upon theſe and the like accounts, ſuch as no *good Chriſtian* could allow of. They have been taught by their *Leaders* to *think amiſs* of Us; and, tho' They know not why, yet they Eſteem it a Matter worthy of their *Zeal*, not only to *Separate* from us, but to *Judge*, nay to *Speak*, oftentimes, very *hardly* of Us. But their Concern to *Oppoſe* what they take to be *Unlawful* on the One hand, has certainly run them into a *grievous Sin* on the Other: Whilſt to avoid an *imaginary Superſtition*, they have fallen into a *Real Schiſm*; and muſt anſwer to God for all the Ill Conſequences of *Separating* from a well-*eſtabliſh'd Church*, upon the account of ſuch things as are not only

Law-

Lawful, but *Expedient*; and, in the general, ſo *Neceſſary* that no *Church* whatſoever can poſſibly Subſiſt without Them.

And as Men may eſteem ſome things to be *Sinful*, which indeed are not; and by that means *miſapply* their *Zeal* on that Side; So may They,

(2*dly*,) No leſs account Other things to be a *Matter* of *Duty*, which God has not *Required*; and be *Zealous*, without need, for the *Obſervation* of Them.

This was again the Caſe of thoſe *Jewiſh Converts* I before mentioned. They thought Themſelves Obliged not only to *Abſtain* from ſuch *Meats* as the *Law* had *Forbidden*; but to *Obſerve* ſuch *Rites*, and *Ceremonies*, as the ſame *Law* had Commanded to be Obſerved. And tho' in other Reſpects they *Obey'd* the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, yet in theſe Particulars they ſtill continued *Zealous* for their *former Inſtitutions*; and forced even the *Apoſtles* themſelves not only to *Allow of*, but many times *to join with Them in*, the ſame *Obſervations*, *Act.* xiv. 5. *&c.* xxi. 20. Rom. xiv. 5, 6. Gal. iv. 10; Coloſ. ii. 16.

I need not tell you how many *fooliſh*, and *Superſtitious Practices*, thoſe of the *Church* of *Rome* recommend to their People as *matters* of *Duty*; and their deluded Votaries more *Zealouſly obſerve*, than the *weightier Parts* of the *Goſpel*, *Juſtice*, *Mercy*, and *Righteouſneſs*. We may *bear Them record* that *they have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge*. They would as ſoon renounce *Chriſtianity*, as *Popery*; and neglect rather to *Pray to God* thro' *Jeſus Chriſt*, than not join the *Merits* and *Interceſſion* of the *Bleſſed Virgin* and their *Saints*, with His *Mediation*.

And I would to God that Men's *Zeal* were *Unreaſonable* only; But alas! it is too often *Sinful* alſo: Whilſt

(3*dly*,) They

(*3dly.*) They are *Zealous* for ſuch things as are not only not *Required by God*, and ſo no *Matter of Duty*; but are *contrary to his Will*; and, as ſuch, *Unlawful to be done.*

This was the Caſe of the *Unconverted Jews*, of whom the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaks. They thought Themſelves obliged to hold faſt to the *Law of Moſes*, as the *Inſtitution of God*, and neceſſary to be *obſerved* out of *Conſcience to Him*: And the Reſult was, that thro' their *Zeal* for *That*, they *deny'd*, *rejected*, and at laſt *Crucify'd*, the *Lord of Glory.* They *oppos'd his Goſpel*, and *perſecuted his Diſciples*; and when they *kill'd* them, *thought* that They *did God Service.*

This was their *Sin*, the ſad Effect of their *miſtaken Zeal*! Nor is the Caſe of thoſe of the *Other Communion*, much better at this Day. They account it their *Duty* to *believe* as *their Church believes*, and to *do* as they are *directed to do*: And ſo out of *Conſcience* to God, they *corrupt* the *Faith*, and *tranſgreſs* the *Commandments of Chriſt*; They *Believe* ſuch things as are *utterly inconſiſtent* with the *Goſpel-Truths*; and *Do ſuch things* as can *never be reconcil'd* with the *Goſpel Piety.*

Were we not too well acquainted with their *Blindneſs*, as well as *Zeal*, we ſhould hardly think it poſſible for any *Chriſtians* to be ſo far deluded as, in *Matters of Faith*, to *truſt* in their *Own Good Works*; to boaſt of *Works* of *Merit* and *Super-errogation*; to think that any other *Propitiatory Sacrifices* were to be *Offer'd to God* for *Sin* beſides that *One*, *Perfect*, and *All-ſufficient Sacrifice* of *the Croſs.* But much more to be ſo Corrupted, as in *Matters of Practice*, to *Worſhip Images*, *Pray to Saints*, *Adminiſter* the *Holy Euchariſt* in *One Kind*, *Keep* the *Publick Service of the Church* in an *Unknown Tongue*; and, as much as poſſible, *deny* the very *Scriptures themſelves* to the *People*: And, which is ſtill more, Condemn all thoſe as *Obſtinate Hereticks*, who *will not*; or rather, to ſpeak more properly, *cannot*,

be

be ſo far deluded, as to *believe*, and *practiſe*, as They do. Yet to this height of *Error* and *Impiety*, has the want of *Chriſtian Knowledge* carried whole *Churches* and *Countries*; and no doubt Many have a true *Zeal of God* in their Concern for theſe Things, which are ſo *contrary* to his *Honour*, as well as *repugnant* to his *Revelations*.

Such ſtrange Miſtakes are Men capable of falling into in this *firſt kind* of *Zeal*; which ariſes from their *Deſire of Enjoying God*, and being made for ever *Happy* with Him.

There is another ſort of *Zeal* founded upon the ſame *Love of God*, with that I have now been conſidering, but under a Different *Reſpect*; namely,

Secondly, As it looks not to Our *Own Happineſs*, in the *Enjoyment* of Him, but to his *Honour*: When being highly concern'd for *the Glory* of God, we are *Zealous* not only to Do what we can to *Promote* it, but to *prevent*, or *correct*, whatever we take to be contrary thereunto. Now this alſo is, in its *Principle*, a *Commendable Zeal*; but yet if not regulated with ſome competent *Knowledge* of what *Does truly make* for *God's Honour*, or is *Contrary thereunto*; it may lead us into *great Errors*, and, in Conſequence thereof, engage us in *Great Sins*.

The *Jews* heretofore ſo acknowledg'd the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature*, as to think it an *Impeachment* of the *Glory of God*, for our *Saviour* to pretend to be his *Son*; and in Conſequence thereof, to *Make himſelf Equal with God*, Jo. v. 18. --- x. 30, 33. They eſteemed it to be the *Singular Prerogative* of God *to Forgive Sin*; and in their *Zeal* for his *Honour* in this Particular, They condemned our Bleſſed *Lord* as *Guilty of Blaſphemy* for pretending to do it, *Mat.* ix. 3. But they did not conſider either the *Power*, or *Dignity* of *Chriſt*: And therefore their *Zeal* was not only *Groundleſs*, but *Sinful*; whilſt by *diſhonouring* the *Son*, They *diſhonoured* the *Father* alſo; and *acted contrary* to

the *Glory of God*, in the very things which They did for the *Preſervation* of it.

Let me add yet one *Remark* more with Reſpect to *Both* theſe *Kinds* of *Zeal*; and it is this: That if Mens *Zeal* be not guided by *Knowledge*, it may be *right* in its *Object*; The *Things* for which they are *Zealous*, may be *truly Good*, and even *worthy* to be *contended for*; and yet they may purſue them by ſuch Means as may be altogether *Unfit*, and *Unjuſtifyable*: And this may make what is *Good* in *its ſelf*, become *utterly Evil* to *Them*.

The *Jews* in our *Text* are an eminent Inſtance of the *Truth* of this *Remark*. They not only *Crucified* our *Saviour*, and *Perſecuted* his *Followers*, but they *Defamed* and *Calumniated* Both. They *ſuborned Falſe Witneſſes* againſt *Him*; They aſcribed the very *Miracles* which He *wrought* by the *Power of God*, to the *Help* of *the Devil*; They *Perſecuted* his *Diſciples* into *ſtrange Countries*: And conſider'd not that ſuch a *Procedure* would have been *wicked*, and *unwarrantable*, tho' *Chriſtianity* had really been as *falſe* a *Religion*, as *Themſelves* pretended *Him* to be. [*and our Bl. Lord as Great an Impoſtor,*]

To be *ſtedfaſt* in the *True Faith*, and to endeavour by all proper Means to *Convert* thoſe who do *Err from* it, and to be *Zealous* in *Both*; is without Diſpute very *Good* in *its ſelf*, and *well-pleaſing to God*. But to *defend* the *Truth* by *Sedition* and *Rebellion*; To *Depoſe*, and even *Murder Princes*, whom we think to be *Heretical*; and employ *Fire* and *Faggots*, *Galleys* and *Dungeons*, for the *Converſion* or *Deſtruction* of their *Subjects*: To *break Faith*, *blow up Parliaments*, and commit the greateſt *Villanies* under a Pretence of Zeal for Religion; is a *Crime*, and a *Scandal*: Such a way of *defending* and *propagating Religion*, as nothing but a *Factious*, *Unchriſtian Spirit* could *ſuggeſt*; nor any thing but a *blind*, and *implicite Obedience* perſuade Men to *Execute*.

When

When our *Saviour* came to a certain Village of the *Samaritans*, and they refus'd to *receive* him, becauſe his Face look'd as if he were going up to *Jeruſalem*; Two of his Diſciples, *James*, and *John*, ſo heinouſly reſented the affront, as to deſire him to *Command fire to come down from Heaven*, and *conſume them* for their Refuſal. But he rebuked them, and ſaid, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of.* Their *Zeal* was *Good*, but the *Effect* of it was *Cruel*. The *Samaritans offended* in their blind *Zeal* againſt *our Saviour*, becauſe he was *going up to Jeruſalem to Worſhip*: But thoſe *Warm Apoſtles* would have *ſinned much more* in the way they would have taken to *puniſh* their *Offence*; and have manifeſted their *Zeal* tho' more *juſtifiable* in its *Cauſe*, yet to have been no leſs *furious*, and *unreaſonable* in its *Operation*. Luke ix. 55.

I might bring this *Obſervation* nearer home to *ſome things that have happen'd very lately among our ſelves*: But I ſhall forbear; and rather beſeech God to Give thoſe, who have had any Hand in them, a due Senſe of their *Own Errors*, than ſay any thing that may ſeem to reflect too hardly upon them. If Our *Old, Inveterate Enemies*, the *Papiſts*, were not at the *bottom* of thoſe *Diſorders*, I am ſure it was *their Work* that was all the while carrying on by them: And it muſt be a very *miſguided Zeal* indeed for any One to think, that any *Intereſts*, but thoſe of *Popery*, can be promoted by the *mutual Quarrels* of *Proteſtants* with *One Another*.

And thus have I ſhewn you not only that a true *Zeal* for *God* may be *deſtitute* of *Knowledge*; but have withal pointed out to you by what *means* it may be ſo. I proceed,

II*dly*, To lay before you, The *fatal Conſequences* of ſuch a *miſtaken Zeal*.

But alas! who can enumerate the half of thoſe *Evils* which the Experience of all Ages has ſhewn to be the ſad *reſult* of this *prolific Principle*; and which our Own *times*, and even our our own *Country*, ſtill continue to feel and Lament. I muſt content my ſelf to mention but a very few of thoſe which were moſt notorious in the *Jews* heretofore, and may but too plainly be obſerved among *Chriſtians* at this Day.

And the 1*ſt*, is, a bitter *Hatred*, and *Malice*, and *Uncharitableneſs* towards all who *differ* from them; but eſpecially in *matters of Religion*. This was eminently the *Caſe of the Jews*, and gave birth to all thoſe other *Evils* which I ſhall have Occaſion to take notice of, as the further *Effects* of their *miſguided Zeal*. And I need not tell you how the ſame *Spirit* continues to prevail among the like *furious*, and *untutor'd Zealots* ſtill. When once men have eſpouſed a *favourite Notion*, and are perſwaded that they are not only in the *right Themſelves*, but that *all Others* ſhould be of the *ſame Opinion*; when a *Cunning Man*, or a *prevailing Party*, have ſo far *deluded* them, that they look upon the *Glory of God*, and the *Intereſts of Religion* to be concern'd in their *Errors*, and that all who Differ from them are from thenceforth to be mark'd out as *Enemies* to Both; 'tis an eaſy ſtep from *Cenſuring* their *Brethren*, to draw them on to *Hate*, and *Deteſt* them: And teach them to account it an Evidence of their *Love* to *God*, to be *furious*, and *uncharitable*, towards their *Neighbour*.

Hence it is that even Wiſe, and Good Men, have been but too apt to beſtow their *Anathema's* upon *One Another*, not only without any *juſt cauſe*, but beyond any *reaſonable meaſure*; as might eaſily be ſhewn were I minded to repeat the Hiſtory of ſuch things as ought rather to be buried in a perpetual Oblivion. But alas! We need not look back to *paſt*

Ages

Ages for that which our *Own Experience* ſpeaks too plainly to Us. The *Sentences*, and *Cenſures*, of *Papiſts* againſt *Proteſtants*; The *bitter*, and *un-chriſtian Malice* which they bear towards them; not to mention the *Heats* and *Animoſities* which have ſometimes riſen among thoſe of the *Reformed Religion* who have chanced to *differ* from *One Another*; and that not in matters of *Doctrine*, but of *Church-Government* and *Diſcipline*, for *Rites* and *Ceremonies*; may ſuffice to convince Us, how apt men are to conſecrate their *Own Paſſions*, and *Prejudices*, by the name of *Zeal*; and then think themſelves at liberty to encourage the *worſt Reſentments*, when they have once gotten a *ſhew* of *Religion* to *Sanctify*, and (as they think) to *juſtify*, the *utmoſt Exceſs* of Them.

Here therefore the *Evils* of this miſtaken, and untutor'd *Zeal*, *begin*; but they do not *ſtop here*: But from *prompting* Men firſt to *cenſure*, and *hate* Thoſe who are poſſibly both *Wiſer*, and *Better*, than *Themſelves*; it carries them on,

2*dly*, To downright *Quarreling* with Them: And then the reſult is, that it produces *Schiſms* in the *Church*, and is too often the Cauſe of *Tumults*, and *Diviſions*, in the *State*. So it was with the *Jews* not only with reſpect to the *Chriſtians*, but *among Themſelves*; and thus it will always be likely to be with *all Others* who have the ſame blind *Zeal* that They had. For *Zeal* is an *active*, and a *violent Principle*: It *raiſes* the *Paſſions*; and for the moſt part carries this unhappy Diſadvantage along with it, that it not only *ſets no bounds* to Them, but rather perſuades men that they *ought not to ſet Any*. That the more *fierce*, and *furious*, their *Zeal* is, the more *Excellent* it ought to be eſteemed by *Themſelves*, and the more *Acceptable* it will render them to *God*. And when once Men are not only thus *miſtaken* in their *Opinions* and *Practice*, but account it their *peculiar Glory* ſo

to

to be; When they ſo far *Sanctify* their *Errors* as to think that all Others ought to be *Deceived* with Them; and that not to *Believe* as they *Believe*, Or *Do* as they *Do*, is a certain *mark* of *Reprobation*; and ſhews Them to be *Enemies of God*, and *Perverters* of the *true Religion*; 'tis eaſy to Conclude what *Diſorders* will be likely to follow from ſuch *Tempers*, and ſuch *Miſtakes*; and a daily Experience too plainly convinces us of it. The leaſt that can be expected is, that they will *with-draw* Themſelves from Thoſe who *Differ* from Them; and, if they can do no more, at leaſt will *Separate from them*, as not worthy of their *Communion*.

Thus it has been in all the *Schiſms* which have ariſen in the *Church*: And however we may ſuſpect the *Heads* of Them to have had ſome Other *Motives* than a meer *miſtaken Zeal* for *God* and their *Duty*; yet we cannot but think, I am ſure we ought in Charity to Hope, that there have been many among their *Followers*, who for want of better Inſtruction have truly been deceiv'd by Them; and, as St. *Paul* tells us of the *Jews* in the *Text*, have had a *Zeal for God*, tho' *not according to Knowledge*.

To ſay nothing of the *Contentions* of *thoſe Abroad*: What has been the reſult of this *Zeal* among *Our Selves*? Men at firſt began to *diſlike ſome things*, they knew not why, in the *Eſtabliſhment* of the *Reformation*; and their *diſtaſte* increas'd even under *Perſecution*, in their *Exile abroad*. They there began from a *difference in Opinion*, to *divide* their *Communion*: And when it pleas'd God to reſtore Them again to the *free Exerciſe* of their *Religion* at home, they brought back their *Prejudices* along with Them: Till at laſt their *Zeal* broke out into a formal *Schiſm*, and never left till it deſtroy'd both *Church* and *State*; and brought upon us that *deluge* of *Evils*, which we ſtill feel the ſad Effects of at this Day.

This

This therefore is the next unhappy *Conſequence* which naturally flows from a *miſguided Zeal*; and where the *Erring Party* wants Power, this is the *worſt* it can do: But if it chances to get Strength, it ſeldom ſtops here, but

3dly, Inſtead of *breaking Communion* with their *Brethren*, it prompts Men more magiſterially to *Caſt Them off* from their *Communion* firſt; and then to *let looſe their Rage* againſt them as not fit to *live upon the Earth*. Thus did the *Jews perſecute* Our *Saviour*, and his *Diſciples*: And thus, notwithſtanding all the Commands of our *Bleſſed Maſter* to *Love Our Brethren*, or if that be not enough, to *Love our very Enemies*, have *Chriſtians* learnt to *Perſecute* One *Another*.

And here again I ſhall not need to Recur to *former Ages* for *Inſtances* to Confirm the *truth* of this *Remark*. The preſent Church of *Rome* is a *Notorious*, as well as *Scandalous*, *Proof* of it. She *Cuts us off* from *her Communion*, and did ſhe ſtop there we ſhould not much complain of her. 'Tis a *benefit* to be *deny'd Communion* with Thoſe with whom we are perſuaded it would be *damnable* for us to *Communicate*. But her *Zeal* carries her much farther than This: She *Damns* Us in Her *Sentences*; and that too does not much affect Us. Let *her Curſe*, while *God Bleſſes*: If her *Anathema's* do *her ſelf* no *harm*, We are very ſure They will do *Us None*. And, to compleat all, She *Excites* All who are of her *Faction*, (for I can ſcarce call it *Religion*) to *perſecute*, and *deſtroy* Us.

I need not tell you how many wicked Devices the Heads of that *Bloody*, and *Idolatrous Church*, have found out to *execute* their *Vengeance* upon Us. Where *Popiſh Princes Rule*, 'tis determined to be a matter of ſuch Conſcience to *Root* out *Proteſtants*, that if They neglect to do it, they ſhall not only be *damned* in the

the *Other World*, but run the hazard of being *depoſed*, and even *murder'd, in this.* If the *Prince* be Himſelf *Reformed*, Or the number of his *Reformed Subjects* too great to be eaſily deſtroy'd; then *Holy Wars* are to be rais'd againſt Them; *Plots* and *Maſſacres* are to be contrived to devour them: Any thing to be done that may but help either to Convert, or to Conſume Them. This is the Reſult of their *miſtaken Zeal*: They maintain the worſt kind of *Chriſtianity*, by the moſt *unjuſtifiable means*; and are a ſad inſtance both in the *One*, and the *Other*, how deſtitute a *true Zeal* (for ſuch without queſtion there is *in Many* of *that Church*) may be of *Knowledge*; and to what a *degeneracy Chriſtians* themſelves may fall, both in their *Doctrine*, and in their *Practice*.

But O bleſſed Saviour! what a monſtrous *Corruption*, what an Utter *Perverſion* is this, of thy *moſt Holy, Mild*, and *Charitable Religion*? How has this *Zeal* deſtroyed at once both the *True Faith*, and *Spirit* of the *Goſpel*; and brought in the moſt Groſs *Superſtitions*, and even *Idolatry* its ſelf, into the *Church of Chriſt*? It is a *ſad*, an *Amazing Conſideration*: A Matter of great *Humiliation*, as well as of grievous *Scandal*, to All who ſincerely *Love God*, and *Honour* his *Truth*: And ought to convince us not only that there may be a *Zeal for God that is not according to Knowledge*; but how careful we ſhould All be, both in the *Examination* of *Things* which we are *Zealous* for, and in our *Manner* of *ſhewing* our *Zeal* for Them.

And now, I ſhall not need add much to convince you,

III*dly*, That notwithſtanding any Pretence of a *Good Intention* for the *Glory of God*, yet if our *Zeal* be ſuch as the *Jews* heretofore was, and as That of *ſome Chriſtians* now is; without *Knowledge*, and contrary

contrary to *Charity*; it ſhall be imputed to Us for *Sin* here, and as ſuch, unleſs we *Repent* of it, be *required* of Us at the *Laſt Day*.

Men may miſtake in *Other Matters*, and yet be *Innocent*. Their Error may be *Involuntary*, perhaps *Invincible*, and for that Reaſon *Excuſable*. But that *Hatred*, and *Malice*, and *Uncharitableneſs*, are *great Sins*; That *Chriſtians* ought not to be *Factious* and *Contentious*; to Injure their *Brethren*, and *Diſturb Communities*: That *Riots* and *Tumults*, *Sedition* and *Rebellion*, are very *wicked things*; and that no Pretence of the *Glory of God*, or *Zeal* for *Religion*, can make them *Lawful*; no ſuch Perſons can *innocently* be *Ignorant*: And therefore, if any Ones *Zeal* ſo far deludes him, as to make him *Think*, or *Do Otherwiſe*, 'tis a ſure Sign that his *Zeal* its ſelf is *Criminal*; and like *Murder* committed by a *Drunken* Man, will rather *aggravate*, than *leſſen* his *Offence*.

When Mens *Errors* are *Involuntary*, and ſo guarded as not to have any *ill Influence* upon their *Practice*; They *miſtake* the *Truth*, not for want of a *due Care* to *inform* themſelves *aright*, but for want of *Capacity*, or *Opportunity*, of being *better Inſtructed*; And in the mean time they neither *Hate*, nor *Condemn* any One for being of a *Contrary Opinion*; If they be otherwiſe *Good* and *Charitable*, and to their *Zeal for God*, add a *Brotherly Love* towards their *Neighbour*; there ought to be great Allowances made for ſuch *Errors*, which are plainly their *Misfortune*, not their *Fault*: And a very few *fundamental Articles* of our *Faith excepted*, in which *all Chriſtians generally* do *agree*, and which are indeed ſo *plainly Revealed*, that 'tis *hardly poſſible* for *any One* to be *miſtaken* in Them; We ought not to doubt but that Men may quietly *differ* from *One Another*, and from the *Truth* too, without any great *danger* to their *Salvation*. But if Men will not be content to be *Deceived Themſelves*, but will oblige *Others*

to *Err with them*; If their *Zeal* ſo far tranſports them as to engage them out of *Conſcience to God*, to be *Uncharitable* towards their *Neighbour*; to *divide the Church*, and to *perſecute its Members*; They muſt not think it ſtrange if the *God of Love* and *Peace* neither can *approve*, nor will *allow of* ſuch *Sins*; tho' they ſhould chance to be ſo far blinded by their *Zeal*, or rather *Fury*, as with thoſe *Jews* in St. *John*, really to think they *did God Service*, and it was their *Duty to* do it.

St. *Paul* tells us what *a bigotted Zeal* he himſelf had for *the Law* of *Moſes* before his *Converſion*: How he *perſecuted the Chriſtians unto Death, binding, and delivering into Priſons both Men and Women*, Acts xxxii. 3, 4. And this he did *ignorantly, in Unbelief*; out of a full Perſuaſion that it was his *Duty* ſo to do. But yet for all this, he confeſſes that he was herein a *Blaſphemer*, and a *Perſecutor*, and *Injurious*, and the *chief of Sinners*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. And all the Service that his *Ignorance*, and *Good Intention* did him, was, That it diſpoſed *God* to bring him to *Repentance*; without which his *Zeal*, Innocent as he thought it, would have proved his *Ruin*, as he afterwards freely own'd it to have been *his Sin*. But *I obtained Mercy*, ſays he, *becauſe I did it ignorantly thro' Unbelief*. And, *For this Cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all Long-ſuffering, for a Pattern to Them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to Life Everlaſting*, Verſes 13. 16.

The ſame was the Caſe of many of the other *Jews*, whoſe *Salvation* therefore our *Apoſtle* earneſtly Prays for in the Verſe before the *Text*. But ſtill he plainly intimates that their *Salvation* was to be the Effect of their *Repentance*: And that, like him, they muſt not only *lay aſide* their *Blind Zeal*, but muſt embrace the *Goſpel*, or there could be no *hope of Pardon* for Them.

O that Men would conſider this more ſeriouſly than 'tis to be feared They do! That before they give the Reins to their *Own Prejudices* and *Paſſions*, un-

under the Notion of *Zeal for God*, They would remember that ſuch a Pretence, tho' it ſhould be *real*, yet will not Sanctify any *wicked*, or *irregular Actions*; and render them *Innocent* in the *ſight of God*. In ſhort; That they would reflect, How that a *Good Intention* is but *One Circumſtance* of a *Good Action*; which muſt be *perfect* and *entire* in *all its Parts*, or notwithſtanding any ſuch *Good Intention*, it will be *Evil* in its ſelf, and *imputed* to Us for *Sin*.

I have before obſerved what an irregular *Zeal* many of Thoſe of the *Church* of *Rome* have for their *Religion*. With what *Hatred* and *Malice*, with what *Fury* and *Bitterneſs*, they purſue Thoſe who differ from Them. How for the ſake of it they *Break their Faith*; *Diſſolve* all the Ties of *Friendſhip* and *Relation*; put off all *Bowels* of *Mercy and Compaſſion*; *Depoſe*, and even *Murder Princes*; Erect *Inquiſitions* firſt to *Torture*, and then to *Burn*, ſuch as they are pleaſed to call *Hereticks*: And this they *All pretend*, and *Some* without Controverſy *truly do*, out of a *Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledge*. But ſhall a *Miſguided Zeal* therefore *excuſe* ſuch *Barbarities*? Shall *Malice*, and *Perjury*, and *Murder*, and *Rebellion*, and *Inhumanity* its ſelf, be no Crimes, becauſe ſome Men have ſo far given Themſelves up to a *Spirit* of *Deluſion*, as to think they may *lawfully commit* them for *God's ſake*? God forbid! Nay, rather we may fear their *Guilt* will be found to be ſo much the *greater*, in that they have abuſed the Sacred *Name of God*, and his *Holy Religion*, to make them a Cover to ſuch Proceedings. For by this Means there is not only a great *Liberty*, and even *Encouragement*, given to Mankind to commit the *worſt* of *Villanies*, without *Remorſe*; but the *Honour of God*, and the *Reputation* of the *Goſpel*, are *Blaſphemed* by *Thoſe* who are not *better Inſtructed* to know how little, after all Mens Pretence to *Zeal* for Them on theſe Occaſions, they either *do allow*, or *will excuſe*, ſuch deteſtable Enormities.

Seeing then it appears that even a *True Zeal* may be ſeparate from *Knowledge*; and, by reaſon thereof, inſtead of promoting the *Glory of God*, the *Intereſts* of *Religion*, and *Mens Own Salvation*, may be *utterly repugnant* to all Theſe, and end in *Shame* and *Damnation* at the laſt; It will certainly very much Import Us All,

Firſt, To be the more careful that the *Cauſe* for which we are, at any time, *Zealous*, be *truly good*: That we be not either *miſtaken our ſelves*, or *miſ-led by Others*, to be *earneſt* in our Contentions for *ſuch Things* as are neither *Juſtifyable* in *themſelves*, nor will warrant our *Zeal* in the *Proſecution of them.*

Gal. iv. 17, 18. It was St. *Paul's* Rule to the *Galatians* in Oppoſition to ſome *who* did *zealouſly affect them, but not well*, that it is *good* to be *zealouſly affected in a Good Thing.* And indeed when we ſhall conſider how apt mens *Paſſions* are to *miſ-lead* their *Reaſon*, and that *Zeal*, as I before obſerved, is not only the Effect of an *Ardent Love*, but is its ſelf a *violent deſire* ariſing from thence, either of *promoting* the *Honour* of the *Perſon* whom *we Love*, or of *removing* what may *hinder* our *Enjoyment* of him; So that it requires not only the *Concurrence* of *ſeveral Paſſions*, but thoſe too *vehemently moved*, to the conſtitution of it: We may eaſily conceive how apt this *Affection* will be to *exceed* its *due bounds*, and to *tranſport* Us not only *beyond what* it *ought to do*, but upon ſuch Occaſions too as do by no means become the *Prudence*, and *Piety*, of either a *Wiſe Man*, or a *Good Chriſtian.*

Nor is this all our *Danger*, tho' this were enough to engage our utmoſt Care in this particular. There have always been, and will always be, many cunning, and deſigning Men in the World, who make Uſe of the *well meant Zeal of Others* to help them to carry on their *Own wicked Enterprizes.* Who like *Demetrius*, and his *Craftſ-men*, being touch'd in their *Own*

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private Intereſts, ſet whole *Cities*, and *Countries* in an *Uproar* for their *great Diana*; whilſt themſelves ſmile at the *Deluſion*, to ſee how under an innocent Concern for *God*, and his Church, they help to promote their Own *Covetous*, or *Malicious*, *Ends*. I ſhall not preſume to bring this *Remark* too near home, to our *Own Concern* in it: This I may ſay, that what Uſe has been made of *Mens Zeal heretofore*, may be *made again*; and for our *Credits ſake*, if for nothing elſe, we ſhould *beware* that it be not *our Own Caſe*. But

Secondly, To warrant our *Zeal*, we muſt not only be well aſſured that the *Cauſe* for which we are concern'd is *good*; but ſhould alſo take care that it be *worthy* the *Fervour* we ſhew for it.

To be *exceeding Zealous* for *little Matters*; To *diſturb our Selves*, and *diſquiet Others*, for *ſuch Things* as tho' perhaps they may be *Good*, yet are of no *real Moment* to the great Concerns of Religion, is *Fooliſh* and *Imprudent*; and renders Our *Zeal*, like that of the *Phariſees*, in *tithing Mint*, *Anniſe*, and *Cummin*, vain and ridiculous. If we can *eaſily*, and *quietly*, *amend* the *leaſt Matters* in which the *Honour of God*, and the *Intereſts* of *Religion*, are concern'd, let us be careful to do it: But otherwiſe, let us not put all things into *Confuſion* for *little*, or *no Cauſe*; nor *pull down* the *Houſe*, merely becauſe ſome of its *Rooms* are not *ſo well contrived*, as we could wiſh they were.

So long as we are in this World there will be *Imperfections* in the *beſt Men*, and in the *beſt Conſtitutions*: And perhaps what We *diſapprove*, Others may have a *better Opinion* of. It is ſo in the Caſe between *Us*, and thoſe who, for *ſuch kind of things*, *Diſſent* from Us. We think not only our *Doctrine* to be ſound, which even they allow; but our *Ceremonies* to *be decent*; Our *Liturgy well compoſed*, and admirably ſuited to the *Ends* for which it was *framed*; and our *Govern-*

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ment ſo *Ancient*, as to be indeed *Apoſtolical*: And we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe that we are certainly *in the right* in *thus thinking* of them. But they have *ſome Exceptions* againſt every One of theſe; yet not *ſo great* but that They can Many of Them *Occaſionally*, (and I hope they do it with a *good Conſcience*) *Communicate* with Us. And ſurely then notwithſtanding any ſuch ſuppoſed *Defects* in *Our Conſtitution*, they ſhould join in a *Conſtant Communion* with Us; at leaſt ſhould not ſhew ſuch an *intemperate Zeal*, as ſome among them have done, againſt Us, for what *Themſelves muſt allow* to be, at leaſt, *tolerable Defects*.

As it is the part of a *Good Man* never to be *Zealous* but *in a Good Matter*; So is it no leſs the part of a *Wiſe Man* to *Proportion* his *Zeal* to the *Subject* of it; and not to ſuffer his *Paſſions*, or *Prejudices*, to tranſport him ſo far beyond the *Bounds* of Reaſon, as to be *vehemently Zealous* for ſuch things as do *not deſerve*, and therefore cannot juſtify, an *immoderate Warmth* for Them.

And as we ſhould be thus careful in the *Things* we are *Zealous* for, to ſee that they be both *Good*, and *Weighty*; ſuch for which we not only *innocently* May, but both *in Duty*, and Prudence, *Ought* to be earneſtly *Concern'd*; So muſt we no leſs take heed,

Thirdly, That our *Zeal* does not carry us to the Uſe of any *Evil*, or *Unlawful Means*, to attain the *End* at which We aim.

The neglect of this was one part of the *Jews* Fault heretofore; and it continues to be the great Crime of Thoſe of the *Church of Rome* at this Day: Whoſe *Religion*, were it as *Pure*, as we are ſure it *is Otherwiſe*; yet would it by no means excuſe thoſe *Unchriſtian Methods* they make uſe of for the *Propagation* of it.

A *Good*

A *Good Cauſe* ſeldom needs to be ſupported by *wicked Means*: Or if it ſhould, yet a *Good Man* would Rather leave his Cauſe to *God's Providence*, and let it *Suffer*, than venture *to Sin* againſt *God* and his *Own Soul*, for the Sake of it. To *do Evil that Good may Come*, was a *Maxim with Some* in the *Apoſtles Times*: But St. *Paul* denounces no leſs than *Damnation* to thoſe who ſhould *Act by it*; and declares that their *Puniſhment*, how ſevere ſoever it might ſeem, would yet be *juſtly due to Them* for ſuch a *Procedure*.

And yet, Bleſſed Lord! How *Common*, I had almoſt ſaid, How *Catholic, an Error* is this? And how eaſily do even *Good Men* ſuffer themſelves to be led away by it? Let the *Lies* and *Forgeries*, the *black Characters*, and *envenom'd Malice* which we have ſeen ſo freely raiſed *by Some*, and ſo *readily* embraced by *Others*; and that not out of *Zeal* for *God's Glory*, but, as it may juſtly be fear'd, for much *worſer Ends*; be a *ſad*, as it is a *plain*, and *demonſtrative Proof*, of This. I need not ſay what numbers of Men have been miſ-led by theſe *unhallow'd Artifices*, to *Divide* Us among our Selves, and almoſt *utterly* to *Overthrow*, the very *Cauſe*, and *Conſtitution*, for which They would be thought to be ſo *Zealouſly Concern'd*. We have *ſeen*, we have *felt*; Oh! that we did not ſtill too ſenſibly both *ſee*, and *feel*, the *unhappy Effects* of it! But ſure then the beſt *Uſe* we can make of our *Experience* in this Particular, will be to *look well to our Selves*; and to *caution all Others*, to beware of ſuch a *Zeal*, as is able to delude Men into the allowance of the *worſt Means* to attain its Purpoſes. And to conſider, that *Envy* and *Malice*, *Lying* and *Calumny*, *Clamour* and *Sedition*; *Undutifulneſs* to *Superiors*, and *Uncharitableneſs* towards our *Brethren*, are very *great Sins*; and that (let the *Pretence* be what it will) Thoſe muſt be very *wicked Men*, who are *guilty of Them*. Some may have *a Zeal* of *God* for ought I know,

I know, in what they do; but I am ſure, if they have, *'tis not according to Knowledge.* And it will be all One to a *Chriſtian* at the *Great Day of Account*, whether he was *miſ-led* by Thoſe who were *really miſtaken Themſelves*; Or by ſuch as only practis'd upon his *Error*, or *Ignorance*; and made his *Zeal* Subſervient to their *Own private Ends*, and *Intereſts*.

Let this then be the *Concluſion* of all; That before we indulge our Selves in any *immoderate warmth* for any thing, We take this *double, neceſſary Precaution*; Never to engage in any *Cauſe* which We are not ſure *is Good*, and *Juſt*; nor ever to *purſue* the *Intereſts* of it by any *Means*, but ſuch as are conſiſtent, both with our *Piety* to *God*; our *Duty* to Our *Governors*; and our *Brotherly Love* and *Charity*, as well as *Juſtice*, towards *Our Neighbour*.

This will render all our Actions *acceptable to God*, and *innocent*, if not always *pleaſing*, to *Man*. And we ſhall then become indeed, like *John* the *Baptiſt*, *burning* and *ſhining Lights*, when, with him, we add *Knowledge* to our *Ardor*; and are as *Eminent* for our *Innocency*, as we are *Remarkable* for our *Zeal*.

God of his Infinite Mercy Grant Us a *Right Underſtanding in all Things*: That by *Truth* and *Peace*; by a *ſound Faith*, and an *extenſive Charity*; by an *unfeigned Love of God*, and a *univerſal Obedience* to *all his Commandments*; we may *Glorify* his *Holy Name*, and *Promote* both *our Own*, and *Others Salvation*; thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. To whom, *&c.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 5. *l.* 2. *from the Bottom, r. in* Judging of *what is forbidden. Page* 10. *l.* 18. *r. They* Drove *his Diſciples.*